

**Brothers and Sisters!** 

Black August is here so I want to breath new life into this community. For the past month I have been struggling to afford to put out this July/ August Issue due to lack of funds. Funds are depleating as the number of subscriptions increases so in order to avoid a halt in this newsletter's production I launched a crowdfund online, please share it with your networks. Now supporters can contribute to the expansion of the Right2Vote Report on CrowdPac at

#### https://rotf.lol/right2vote

I want post a special Thank You to Vincent Galloway in WADOC for his \$50 donation to SawariMedia. It warms my heart sooo much when you all send me checks directly from the facility.

For clarity sake, I don't use my platform to write articles about individual pleas for innocence for two reasons: first, I'm not a lawyer so I have no reliable way to verify claims of inoccence and second, I don't believe that prison is just for the innocent or for those considered guilty. I'm an total abolitionst, so a person's innocence doesn't make their case any more significant to me over someone who took responsibility for the actions that resulted in their incarceration so please refain from these types of requests. I will not respond.

Finally, I can't help but begin this newsletter with informing you all that on July 3rd I was married to the most wonderful, caring and strong man that I 'm blessed to call my husband. Some of you may have seen our pictures on social media and for others who've heard the

nave seen our pictures on socionews I've gotten requests for photos so I'll share one of my favorites that was captured right after the ceremony, which was held outdoors at Carpenter Nature Reserve in Michigan.

Black August brings new beginnings for us all!

In Solidarity, Amani Sawari



#### STIMULUS (EIP) PAYMENT SUPPORT

**The Community WI** P.O. Box 100392 Milwaukee, WI 53210, the-communitywis@gmail.com, www.thecommunitynow.us.

**Lieff Cabraser**, at 415-956-1000: Applicant Assistants on the outside can call the law firm handling the court case

**Root & Rebound**, at 510-279-4662: Incarcerated people can call this number collect with questions

**Network Federal Defense Hotline**, at 212-679-2811 to report incidents of federal repression and other federal law enforcement efforts to under- mine civil rights

REBATE REMINDER: If you did not recieve payment you can still get a tax rebate by submitting a 1040-2020 form. The form is reletively simple for those who have no income to report. After filling out the 1 page form, mail it to your local IRS office. There are multiple IRS offices all over the country, applications mailed to any office are rerouted to the correct local office and processed accouringly. Printed forms can be mailed to the Department of the Treasury at Internal Revenue Service, Ogden, UT 84201-0002 OR at Internal Revenue Service, Kansas City, MO 64999-0002

VBMIJ: In partnership with Spread The Vote we're hosting Vote by Mail in Jail for anyone who is an eligible to vote while incarcerated (check voter eligibility guidelines in your state, some citizens who are incarcerated pretrial or who're serving misdomener sentences are in fact eligible). As a part of this program we fund and supply incarcerated voters with registration packets, absentee ballot applications, mailing supplies, nonpartisan voter guides, deadline reminders and we do their ballot tracking. We've developed the program to function remotely with the support of a contact person at the facility and are recreuting new facilities to work with right now! If you're interested in being apart of or supporting this program getting established at your facility please let me know, write "VbMiJ Expands" on the top of your letter or on the outside of your envelope.

#### Want to get involved?

Partners (facilities, non profit orgs or groups) Sign up at https://www.votebymailinjail.org/how-to-get-involved Incarcerated voters (individual family member or friend of the voter) Sign up to participate to have materials mailed to them at https://right2vote.report/defend/

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# **MOVEMENT MOVES**

PEOPLE | POSITIONS | POWER

# Where'd My Stimmi Go?

by Amani Sawari I July 16, 2021 I sawarimi.org

As the majority of Americans have cashed their stimulus checks, incarcerated citizens are burdened under the weight of new restrictions along with mounting telecom and mailing costs for staying connected with loved ones throughout the pandemic. In May I wrote an article listing reasons, Why People in Prison Should Recieve stimulus money. That following October I was pleased to share that incarcerated citizens with the support of Lieff Cabraser lawfirm and the Equal Justice Society won a lawsuit filed against the United States Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service that, "not only defended prisoners right to receive the stimulus funding that was sent to US citizens in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, but it also established a new class of people, the prison class, a class of people that Jailhouse Lawyers have been fighting to legitimize throughout prison resistance actions of the past decade." While this win was a worthwhile advancement in the movement for prisoners human rights, it was logistically flawed resulting in only a fraction of incarcerated citizens actually being to make use of their stimulus payment.

I've recieved updates from incarcerated poeple and their support networks attempting to troubleshoot the chatic scenario of completing the freefile tax form, for which a template had been included in R2VR Issue 16, and coordinating with prison mailrooms to deposit checks into prisoners' individual trust account managed by the facility, for which many incarcerated citizens incurred unforseeable fees assessed by the facility prior to the deposit. These instances were unfortunate, yet more ideal than others who still have yet to recieve their stimmi. In North Carolina a subscriber writes, "inmates have recieved stimulus money because their family went online and filed but I don't have on one to do mine." In instances were papers for filing weren't thouroughly distributed and checks had been lost in mailrooms past their deposit date, funds are converted to IRS tax credits, an unprotected source of revenue. Another prisoner in Washington state shares, "I did file for my stimulus tax in 2020 [but] if i was able to contact, then I'll probably get it, but collect calls are 15min and it takes IRS 15-30min to get an operator on the line". Following up with IRS representatives on EIP requests is nearly impossible for incarcerated recipiants.

While there have been some success stories, for many who do not have internet access, a strong outside support network, readily available 1040 forms or the ability to make a phone call longer than 15min, then they are at mercy of DOC negligance. Unfortunately, as a result of the lack of coordination between IRS and DOC, tens of thousands of incarcerated citizens have fallen through the cracks in receiving pandemic support. I encourage the newly established prison class to enforce their class status by following up with their IRS office directly on their check/credit status using their SSN and approximate application file date. Write your local IRS office and let them know that your EIP was misallocated and/or confiscated by the prison, hold them accountable. —

# **Engaging in Black August**

Stay Centered with 7AM Set Weekday Morning Yoga I Instagram @SawariMi

I'll be hosting a morning yoga session livestream every weekday morning at 7am EST. Supporters can join the livestream on Instagram @SawariMi starting on Monday August 2nd and ending on Tuesday August 31st. Along with this being a practice of restoration and reflection I'll also be reading poetry and fundraising for the Right2Vote Report newsletter. Contributions will be accepted



on Cash App at \$FreedomFund, on Vimeo @SawariMi or on our CrowdPac Profile. If you can't make it, let someone else know who can so that we can keep this newsletter running through 2022. Supporters can contribute to the expansion of the Right2Vote Report on CrowdPac at https://rotf.lol/right2vote

### Holiday Heart I Recruiting Participants to Mail for Women's Equality Day on August 26, 2021

Is there an incarcerated women on your heart that you'd like to make sure is recognized for this upcomming Women's Equality Day. If so we would love to send her a card. In addition to getting some words of encouragment, she'll also be invited to the Right2Vote subscription list to recieve ongoing free issues of the newsletter through the duration of her incarceration.

Have a special postcard sent to Her on the inside	
Encourage Her: Holiday Heart for Women's Equality Day	
Name: First Last	
Mailing Info	
PIN	
Facility (if known), State	
Facility Name, ST	

#### **ISSUEVOTER**

**IssueVoter** is working with **Right2Vote** to highlight two pieces of outstanding legislation in Congress and we encourage you to send your opinion on any or all of these to your representative. You may write to your representative and let them know which issues you care about and how you would like them to vote on these bills. Every constituent contact is counted by each representative's staff, no matter whether it is received by mail or phone. *Please make your voice heard!* 

#### Should Congress abolish the death penalty?



#### Federal Death Penalty Abolition Act (H.R. 97)

This bill would abolish the death penalty under federal law. No individual could be sentenced to death, and those currently sentenced to death would be resentenced.

Sponsor: Rep. Adriano Espaillat (Democrat, NY, District 13)

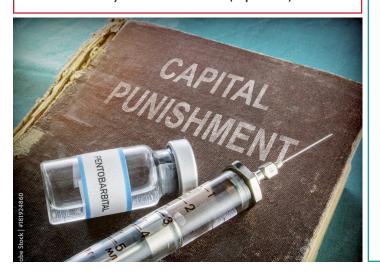
#### 66 Opponents say...

"I firmly believe in capital punishment. It saves the lives of the innocent by punishing the very worst offenders who have committed unspeakable acts of evil, and it deters future crimes. There are some people who disagree with that belief. But here's what they can't argue with: capital punishment is undisputedly the law. Each inmate on death row was convicted in federal court and sentenced by a jury of his or her peers under laws passed by Congress and signed by the president."

- Sen. Ted Cruz (Republican, TX)

"Congress has expressly authorized the death penalty through legislation adopted by the people's representatives in both houses of Congress and signed by the President. Under Administrations of both parties, the Department of Justice has sought the death penalty against the worst criminals, including these five murderers, each of whom was convicted by a jury of his peers after a full and fair proceeding. The Justice Department upholds the rule of law—and we owe it to the victims and their families to carry forward the sentence imposed by our justice system."

- Former Attorney General William Barr (Republican)



#### 66 Proponents say...

"We are past-time as a Nation ending the practice of killing Americans to prove killing is wrong. We must end this barbaric and inhumane practice now. We have learned that executing Americans continues to be administered in a definitively racist, and classes manner. The financial cost is exorbitant, and there is no evidence that the practice helps reduce murders or other crimes. More African Americans than any other race or ethnicity are erroneously executed and either freed or mistakenly executed. This collateral damage must stop as it is actually more expensive to sentence someone to life in prison than executing them."

- Hilary O. Shelton (Director, NAACP Washington Bureau)

"Even the most heinous of crimes can be punished without killing. Yet poor people, especially from communities of color, have been disproportionately charged with capital crimes and sentenced to death compared to wealthier defendants. The stream of people awaiting execution who have been exonerated with DNA evidence is another chilling sign of the death penalty's brokenness and barbarism. ... The high cost of maintaining the death penalty also diverts needed resources from initiatives to serve victims and to rehabilitate other offenders."

- Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (Democrat, CA, District 12)

"The death penalty is fundamentally racist, and its roots can be traced directly to America's terrible history of lynching... The racial disparities in the death penalty are beyond the pale, and we must amend this racist legacy of our criminal justice system. Human life is invaluable, and every human life is sacred. Yet, the death penalty forgets a core tenet of humanity – human beings change. Humans have an immense capacity to learn, to heal, and to grow. Executing someone denies this principle and gives no course for a person to grow. A person is not defined by the worst choice they made, but the death penalty only views someone's life through this narrow lens. And what's more, it undermines the core vision upon which this nation was founded. I am proud to introduce this legislation, and believe it is a critical step towards a more righteous, equitable, and just society for all Americans."

- Representative Adriano Espaillat (Democrat, NY, District 13)

# Should Congress allow digital communication confidentiality between attorneys and incarcerated individuals?



# To regulate monitoring of electronic communications between an incarcerated person in a Bureau of Prisons facility (H.R. 546)

This bill would prohibit the Department of Justice from monitoring privileged electronic communication between incarcerated individuals and their attorneys. The Attorney General would create a program to forbid the monitoring of privileged digital communication in the Bureau of Prison's email system. This program allows for the retention of electronic communication until an incarcerated individual is released. The bill would extend attorney-client privilege to electronic communication such as emails and the Trust Fund Limited Inmate Computer System. Court ordered warrants approved by the US Attorney or Assistant Attorney General would allow access to privileged electronic communication. Sponsor: Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (Democrat, NY, District 8)

#### 66 Opponents say...

"We don't want to read attorney-client communications. We are not doing this for some strategic advantage. Nobody ever intended the system to be confidential. When you log in to the prison email system, there's a clear warning that the email will be monitored. So defense lawyers should act accordingly."

- James McGovern (Former chief of the criminal division at the United States Attorney's Office in Brooklyn)

#### 66 Proponents say...

"Most fair-minded individuals understand that our system of justice requires a dynamic where people have access to the effective assistance of counsel necessary to adequately defend themselves. This is not just common sense—it is a constitutionally-protected right. The ability to send and receive confidential electronic communications has never been more important now that email has become the safest and most efficient way for attorneys and their incarcerated clients to communicate."

- Representative Hakeem Jeffries (Democrat, NY, District 8)

#### Should communities oversee police departments to prevent discrimination in policing?



## Enhancing Oversight to End Discrimination in Policing Act (H.R. 3732)

This bill will reform investigations conducted by the Department of Justice to minimize discrimination in policing. It will establish community oversight bodies to ensure that police departments communicate with the communities and follow consent agreements.

Sponsor: Rep. Marilyn Strickland (Democrat, WA, District 10)

#### **66** Opponents say...

"The studies I've seen have suggested two things: one that, in fact, police are less likely to shoot at a black suspect, a little bit more likely to shoot at white, however that police are more inclined to use non-lethal force in a contact with an African American suspect."

- Former Attorney General William Barr (Republican)

#### **66** Proponents say...

"Across the country, Americans have urgently called on their government officials to re-imagine policing, rebuild trust, and improve public safety for all, especially African-Americans and other communities of color. I"m proud to introduce the Enhancing Oversight to End Discrimination in Policing Act with Senator Warren, because Congress has a critical role to provide the resources and accountability needed to ensure that all of our communities are properly served, protected, and respected."

- Representative Marilyn Strickland (Democrat, WA, Distrct 10)

#### Should Congress allow mail-in voting and automatic voter registration?



#### Vote at Home Act (S. 136)

This bill would amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow vote by mail and the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to automatically register voters for federal elections through state motor vehicle authorities. The bill prohibits states to include additional conditions to cast mailin ballots except states may impose a deadline. States must mail ballots not later than 2 weeks before an election. The US Postal Service will expedite federal election ballots and not require postage. If an individual is deemed eligible to vote and has not registered, states must issue a notification informing them of their eligibility and a description of the process to register or decline.

Sponsor: Sen. Ron Wyden (Democrat, OR)

#### 66 Opponents say...

"Use of mail-in ballots more than doubled from 24.9 million in 2004 to 57.2 million in 2016, and around 40% of U.S. votes are now done by mail. Along with this dramatic increase there have been virtually no new safeguards, scrutiny, or additional research on the risks of vote by mail. If the current pandemic is going to force the issue during a presidential election, proponents of voting by mail may have to address obvious risks that come with proposing that more than 200 million ballots be mailed out this fall."

- Mark Hemingway (Senior Writer, Real Clear Investigations)

#### 66 Proponents say...

"The individual right to vote, the cornerstone of our democracy, is under threat in communities across America. Last year we saw a widespread expansion of vote-at-home access as a safe and secure way to participate during the COVID-19 pandemic. We should continue to make voting easier, not harder. This important bill would strengthen and clarify the right to vote at home, the most secure and convenient way..."

- Senator Earl Blumenauer (Democrat, OR)

#### **Should Congress repeal the Motor Voter Law?**



# To Repeal the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (H.R. 36)

This bill would repeal the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, also known as the Motor Voter Law. The Motor Voter Law offers voter registration services at state motor vehicle agencies while simultaneously applying for a driver's license as well as by mail. This bill would allow states to enact and enforce their own election laws to prevent voter fraud.

Sponsor: Rep. Andy Biggs (Republican, AZ, District 5)

#### 66 Opponents say...

"With [the National Voter Registration Act of 1993] and its appropriate implementation by States, voters can register by applying for a driver's license, through uniform mail application, or by applying in person at various agencies designated by the States. As a result, registration for Federal election[s] will become as accessible as possible, while the integrity of the electoral process is clearly preserved."

- Former President Bill Clinton (Democrat)

#### 66 Proponents say...

"Election integrity is central to the bedrock of our constitutional republic. Currently, though federal law requires an individual to be a U.S. citizen to vote in federal elections, it requires states to accept merely a signed attestation from an individual that he or she is a U.S. citizen – without any further proof of citizenship. This lax procedure, to register individuals to vote in states that have strict citizenship requirements for voter registration, is a threat to the integrity of our elections."

- Rep. Andy Biggs (Republican, AZ, District 5)

"Loopholes in the voter registration process increases the risk of voter fraud and threatens the integrity of our democracy."

- Representative Greg Steube (Republican, FL, District 17)

#### Should the voting age be lowered to 16?



#### Extending the right to vote to citizens sixteen years of age (H.J. Res. 23)

This resolution proposes an amendment to the Constitution of the United States that would lower the minimum voting age from eighteen to sixteen years old. It would repeal the 26th amendment to the Constitution that set the minimum voting age to eighteen years old. This resolution would allow Americans sixteen years or older the right to vote that cannot be denied on account of age.

Sponsor: Rep. Grace Meng (Democrat, NY, District 6)

#### **66** Opponents say...

"Our society has agreed since then for 50 years that 18 is when a child becomes an adult. I find it interesting that our friends across the aisle don't want to have 16- and 17-year-olds tried as adults when they commit violent adult crimes. And yet they want those 16- and 17-year-olds to have the franchise."

- Representative Pat Fallon (Republican, TX, District 4)

#### 66 Proponents say...

"Our young people, including 16- and 17-year-olds, continue to fight and advocate for so many issues that they are passionate about from gun safety to the climate crisis. They have been tremendously engaged on policies affecting their lives and their futures. Their activism, determination, and efforts to demand change are inspirational and have truly impacted our nation. It's time to give them a voice in our democracy by permitting them to be heard at the ballot box."

- Representative Grace Meng (Democrat, NY, District 6)

#### Should Congress establish a commission to investigate the 2020 election?



#### To Establish the Election Integrity Commission (H.R. 607)

This bill establishes the Election Integrity Commission. which would (1) study the integrity and administration of the November 2020 general election; and (2) make recommendations to Congress on improving the security, integrity, and administration of federal elections. The Commission terminates 30 days after the submission of its final report.

Sponsor: Rep. Lloyd Smucker (Republican, PA, District 11)



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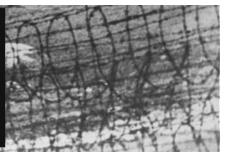
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"Loopholes in the voter registration process increases the risk of voter fraud and threatens the integrity of our democracy."

- Rep. Greg Steube (Republican, FL, District 17)

# KONCENTRATION KAMP KHRONICLES

ANALYSIS | NARRATIVE | POETRY



# Adapted U.S. Dept. of Justice Civil Rights Division Complaint on Conditions at Angola

by Calvin Colemann | July 2021 | Angola (LSP)

Director Michael Alston of The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) plainly stated that, "The OCR has the administrative responsibility for ensuring that recipients of Department of Justice (DOJ) financial assistance DO NOT DISCRIMINATE on basis of RACE, color, national origin, disability, sex, religious, and age, and in some cases, sexual orientation and gender identity." The decision by the U. S. Supreme Court on April 20, 2020 in Ramos v. Louisiana confirmed that Louisiana's majority jury scheme was introduced with DISCRIMINATORY INTENT and has been perpetuated in State law with an ONGOING DISCRIMINATORY EFFECT, proving that the nonunanimous jury conviction in my case is a direct result of RACIAL DISCRIMINATION by all aforementioned parties above.

African Americans make up more than 65% of the prison population in Louisiana while only accounting for about 35% of the general population, a vestige of the "Jim Crow Jury" and testament to the lasting effect the racist law has had on Black defendants in the state. If there was ever any doubts whether or not racial animus was a substantial or motivating factor in the enactment of Louisiana's majority verdict scheme, the openly racist statements made by Convention President, Kruttscchnitt and Hon. Thomas J. Semmes at the Louisiana Constitutional Convention of 1898 removed them and provided a clear indication of their purpose for being there:

"We know that the convention has been called together by the people of the State to eliminate from the electorate the mass of corrupt and illiterate voters who have for the last quarter of a century degraded our politics...," said Kruttscchnitt. "I say to you, that we can appeal to the conscience of the nation, both judicial and legislative and I don't believe that they will take the responsibility or striking down the system that we have reared in order to protect the purity of the ballot box and perpetuate the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race in Louisiana." And echoing his sentiment was Hon. Thomas J. Semmes who stated that the "mission" of the delegates had been "to establish the supremacy of the white race in the state." There is no doubt that Louisiana's majority verdict scheme overwhelmingly contributed to the mass incarceration of Blacks in the state, proving that me and many other incarcerated people of color have been and continue to be the victims of RA-CIAL DISCRIMINATION by all the above mention parties. Because even though the racist law was repealed in 2018 by Louisiana voters, its lasting DISCRIMINATORY EFFECT remains very much intact---WE ARE STILL HERE. -

During the 1898 LA constitutional convention, State lawmakers' mission was to preserve the LA socioeconomic supremacy of southern whites without running afoul of federal constitutional rights. When Louisiana lawmakers created the majority verdict scheme, they did so with the intention of circumventing the 13th

Amendment and creating a new system of slavery in the post-Civil War era. One that involved the use of the Black Codes to disenfranchise black voters and later included convict leasing. A recent law review by Professor William P. Quigley offers a vivid description of the Louisiana's modern day system of slavery under a different name:

Major James---a retired Major of the Confederate army who sold Angola to the State---presided over, as Professor Carleton called it, twenty-five years of "the most cynical, profit-oriented and brutal prison regime in Louisiana history". Indeed, the origins of modern corrections in Louisiana can be found in Major James' administration of Angola. His guiding principals included the isolation of inmates from public and political view, the emphasis on economy and cheapness in prison operations, agricultural labor, the perpetuation of the pre-Civil War racist mentality, which led to systematic racial discrimination among inmates, affording white inmates superior treatment and work opportunities, and "the virtually complete neglect of rehabilitation".

In the same way that Major James benefitted from Louisiana's majority verdict scheme in the post-Civil War era, the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association today is profiting from a similar form of convict leasing. In an extensive investigative report written by Gordon Russell and Maya Lau for The Advocate (December 17, 2016), a much needed light was shined on many of the unethical practices that still remain in Louisiana's criminal justice ranks. The informative article exposed the truth about the way sheriffs' offices profit from housing state inmates and showed us how those inmates were also used as bargaining chips.

Three decades ago, as Louisiana officials struggled to meet the conditions of a federal judge's ruling that the state's prisons were too crowded, they came up with the money-saving gambit of putting state inmates in local jails. "So the state began signing contacts in which corrections officials promised to fill beds in yet-to-be-built jails, and many Louisiana sheriffs used the deals to get financing for a jail building boom. "The local-jail solution, largely the brainchild of Richard Stalder (who served as the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections from 1992 to 2008), has the growth of work-release programs that allow sheriff's offices to profit handsomely from wages of state inmates.

Although the alleged discrimination stated in my claims above began in 1898 at the Louisiana Constitutional Convention, it wasn't until April 20, 2020 that the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed in Ramos v. Louisiana that racial discrimination was the impetus of the convention, and that the discriminatory effect has been perpetuated by the courts and still remains. —

#### Mailing Info

Calvin Coleman 399534 Louisiana State Penitentiary 17544 Tunica Trace Angola, LA 70712

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